

Communications Team

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www.kingcounty.gov/health



Frequently Asked Questions for Employers about H1N1 virus (swine flu)

How can employers protect themselves, their families, and their employees?

- **Sick employees should stay home from work** or consider ways they can work from home. Prevent the spread of illness within the workplace by asking employees to stay home when sick. During the H1N1 flu outbreak, national and local leaders and Public Health encourage employers to be generous with sick leave to protect the health of the community.
- **Promote actions to stop the spread of germs:**
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the crook of your elbow.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- **Develop a business continuity plan as a precaution.** Public Health provides planning guidance and a video for businesses and organizations at www.kingcounty.gov/health/pandemicflu
- **Encourage personal preparedness.** Employees who have planned for child care in the event of school closures and who know what to do when loved ones get sick will likely lose less days of work during an outbreak. Information on planning at: www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1
- **Keep updated about H1N1 virus.** Employees often look to employers as an important source of information. Public Health continually updates information and educational materials for distribution to employees: www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1

When should I send a sick employee home?

In general, encourage employees with flu-like symptoms to go home. These symptoms include fever of 100° F. or more with sore throat, coughing, runny nose, vomiting or diarrhea.

If employees have been sick with H1N1 flu, how long should they stay home?

As with seasonal flu, employees should remain home from work until at least 24 hours after fever has gone away. **Do not require a doctor's note for workers who are ill with influenza-like illness to validate their illness or to return to work.** Doctor's offices and medical facilities will be extremely busy caring for ill persons. Appointments and requests to get doctor's notes for work and school make it difficult for health care providers to care for those who medical attention.

For more information and frequent updates:

Public Health – Seattle & King County, www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1

Flu Hotline for recorded information in English and Spanish, 1-877-903-KING (5464), 24 hours/day. TTY: 711